

STUDENTS' PERCEPTION AND THEIR COMMITMENT TO WORK IN TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

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ABSTRACT

The tourism and hospitality sector has been recognised as one of the fastest and largest growing industries in the world, providing opportunities for job prospects, driving exports, and creating tremendous prosperity around the globe. The study aims to examine students' perception and their commitment to work in tourism and hospitality field of work after graduation. Data were collected using a set of questionnaires. Non-probability sampling technique was used in selecting the 117 respondents from East Malaysia polytechnics who are majoring in tourism and hospitality programme with working experience in the sector. The data were analysed using the SPSS 25.0 and presented in frequency and percentages. The findings showed that the industry person congeniality has a significant medium relationship with a commitment to work in the tourism and hospitality industry. The study has some implication for industry person congeniality, promotion opportunities, managers and commitment to work in the tourism and hospitality field of work

Keywords: Student's perception, work commitment, tourism and hospitality industry.

INTRODUCTION

The tourism and hospitality industry are the largest and fastest growing sector and provides job opportunities around the world. In 2017, the tourism and hospitality industry made a significant contribution of 3.1 per cent to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth and provided 6 million jobs in the industry. It generated US\$ 7.6 trillion (10.2%) of global GDP and 292 million jobs in year 2016 (World Travel and Tourism Council, 2018). Malaysia tourism and hospitality industry have become the third-biggest contributor to the Malaysia economy, behinds the manufacturing and agriculture industry. Malaysia was the second most visited country in Southeast Asia, the 12th the most visited destinations in the world by the year 2017 (World Travel and Tourism Council, 2018). The primary tourism and hospitality industry in Malaysia consists of retail trade, food and beverages serving services, accommodation, country-specific tourism characteristics, and sport and recreation.

The tourism and hospitality sector provides a considerable opportunity for job prospects in Malaysia. By 2015, 2.5 million employees are working in the tourism and the sector, and only 2.0 million have increased by 4.4 percent compared to 2010. This sector provides 50.7 billion salaries and wages in 2015, up 11.2 percent compared to 29.7 percent in 2010 (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2017). The worked in tourism and hospitality includes the retail trade, food and beverages, accommodation, country-specific tourism characteristics and sport and recreation (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2017). Based on (World Travel and Tourism Council, 2018) Malaysia in the ranking, 117 of travel and tourism total made a significant contribution to employment in the year 2018.

Table 1: Direct Contribution of Travel & Tourism to Employment in Malaysia

Year	Employment ('000 Jobs)	Growth (%)
2012	559,2	-6.4
2013	637,4	14
2014	656,2	3.0
2015	647,9	-1.3
2016	671,6	3.7
2017	669,8	-0.3
2018	677,4	1.1

Source: World Travel and Tourism Council (2018)

This table 1 shows the total direct contribution of travel and tourism to employment in Malaysia. In the year 2017 travel and tourism generated 670,000 jobs directly (4.6% of full work), was increased by 1.1% in the year 2018 to 677, 500 (4.6% of total employment) includes employment by hotels, travel agents, airlines and other passenger transportation services (excluding commuter services). It also includes, for example, the activities of the restaurant and leisure industries directly supported by tourists (World Travel and Tourism Council, 2018). The increase of job opportunities in tourism and hospitality industry every year, show the important of this industry provides jobs to Malaysia.

RESEARCH SCOPE

For the previous problem, the statement indicates several research gaps. First, there is a lack of conceptualisation of career perceptions and their commitment to work towards Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) students' especially for East Malaysia polytechnic students'. Numerous studies have focused on the career perception in tourism and hospitality industry worldwide (Kusluvan and Kusluvan, 2000; Aksu and Köksal, 2005; Richardson, 2009; Sibson, 2011; Wan, Wong and Kong, 2014). However, although widely discussed, the career perception of students' in the tourism and hospitality industry in Malaysia context (Mohd Fadli Mohd Yusof and Jasmine Zea Raziah Radha, 2010; Noor Suhaila Yusof and Kamal Izzuwan Ramli, 2010; Zubaidah Mohd Ali Tan *et al.*, 2016). In Malaysia, lack to study career perception based on TVET students. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine career perception and commitment to work in the industry after graduation.

This study focused on East Malaysia Polytechnic students from semester five, six and graduates who have completed their studies but have not yet graduated. There were 117 respondents selected using non-probability sampling technique. The respondents were chosen among the students had at least two months of working experience or the intern programme in the industry and can respond to all the variables stipulated in this study. The purposive sampling is chosen to represent a wide range of students' with a common mind and of the subjects who are most advantageous placed or ideally place to provide the information needed for this research (Sekaran, 2003). The objective of this study is to examine student's perception and their commitment to work in industry tourism and hospitality field of work

LITERATURE REVIEW

Perception is defined as the process of recognising, organising and interpreting sensory information. Perception also deals with the human being sensed that generate signs from the environment through sight, hearing, touch, smell and taste (Ward, Matthew; Grinstein, Georges; Keim, 2015). The simple meaning of perception is the process of human interpreting the world around and creating a mental representation of the environment.

There are many studies reported the negative perceptions of students' career towards tourism and hospitality working environment (Kusluvan and Kusluvan, 2000; Aksu and Köksal, 2005; Richardson, 2009; Wan *et al.*, 2014) The tourism and hospitality industry working environment being characterised as the industry that related to stressful, low quality of life, long working hours, seasonal

job, low social status, unfair promotions opportunities, low and insufficient pay and benefits, disqualified managers, poor attitude and behaviour of managers, unexperienced co-workers, bad attitudes and behaviour of co-workers, and reduced working conditions for worker (Kusluvan and Kusluvan, 2000). Those were the negative reaction to the tourism and hospitality working environment.

Students in the tourism and hospitality programme are less interested in selecting this industry after graduation. (Wang and Huang, 2014; Brown, Thomas and Bosselman, 2015; Kim, Jung and Wang, 2016). Meanwhile, some students who have been working or practical experience in tourism and hospitality give negative responses (Kusluvan and Kusluvan, 2000; Barron, Maxwell, Broadbridge and Ogden, 2007; Richardson, 2008) and not interested in getting a career in this industry. Such working experiences might influence them to choose tourism and hospitality field of work as career path.

METHODOLOGY

A quantitative research approach used to test the objectives by examining the relationship between variables. These variables, in turn, to measure the instruments, so that numbered data were analysed using statistical procedures (Cresswell and Creswell, 2018).

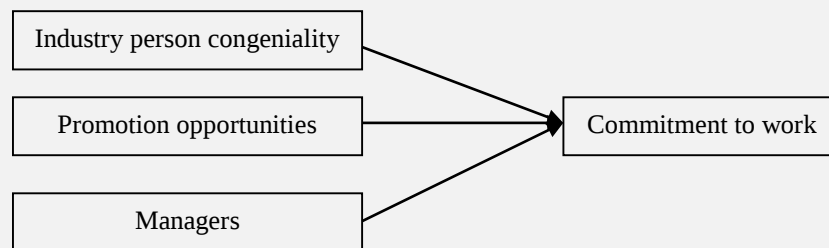


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework (Kusluvan and Kusluvan, 2000)

The conceptual framework model in fig.1, shown the graphical displays of the students' perception of independent variables and the dependent variable commitment to work in the tourism and hospitality field of work. The framework builds on the preferences that students' perception is industry person congeniality, promotion opportunities, and, managers' have a predictive relationship with a commitment to work.

The measurement used in this study is the multidimensional approach introduced by (Kusluvan and Kusluvan, 2000) in their study in Turkey. It has been tested by other scholars in different contexts, including Turkey (Aksu and Köksal, 2005), Korea (Tuzunkan, 2018), Australia (Richardson, 2009, 2010), Malaysia (Zubaidah Mohd Ali Tan *et al.*, 2016), China (Wan *et al.*, 2014), and Vietnam (Le, Klieve and McDonald, 2018), for this study researcher used the four multidimensional career perceptions to examine student's perception and commitment to work in tourism and hospitality field of work . The four multidimensional are the nature of work, co-workers, managers and commitment to work.

This study using questionnaire to collect the quantitative data. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) used to analyse the data. The SPSS has been used extensively among the researchers to analyse the quantitative data in various research fields including business.

RESULT

Respondent Demographic

The respondents in this study were female (76.1%), and male (23.9%). Approximately 2.6% students who were studying in semester 5, 25.6% students in semester 6 and 71.8% students who had finished their study but not yet graduate. There are (74.4%) of respondent choose this programme as the first choice, meanwhile (25.6%) did not select this programme as their first choice. In term of working experience, half of the students, 50.5% had working experience/internship programme in the industry

for four to five months, 27.4% had experienced eight months and above. 14.5% had six to seven months of working experience.

Table 2: The Respondents' Demographics in Frequency and Percentages Distributions

Items	Categories	N = 117	Frequency (%)
Gender	Male	28	23.9
	Female	89	76.1
Semester	Semester 5	3	2.6
	Semester 6	30	25.6
	Not Graduate	84	71.8
First choice programme	Yes	30	25.6
	No	87	74.4
Did anyone persuade you to choose tourism and hospitality studies?	No	73	62.4
	Not Sure	7	6.0
	Yes	37	31.6
Working experience	2 - 3 month	8	6.8
	4 - 5 month	59	50.4
	5 - 5 month	1	0.9
	6 - 7 month	17	14.5
	Eight months above	32	27.4

Reliability Test

The Cronbach's alpha has been used to check the internal accuracy and reliability of the questionnaire. Table 3 provides an internal consistency analysis of the data collected for students' perception in the tourism and hospitality sector, which is using SPSS version 25. The reliability test value shows the average scale for all constructions is valid 0.70, and acceptable (Nunnally, 1978)

Table 3: Reliability Test Result

Dimension	Cronbach's Alpha	Reliability Result
Industry person congeniality (IPC)	0.634	Average
Promotion Opportunities (POM)	0.714	Accepted
Managers (MAG)	0.702	Accepted
Commitment to work (CTW)	0.706	Accepted

Pearson Correlation

The Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between the variables. As shown in Table 4, the industry person congeniality and promotion opportunities show a low correlation ($r = 0.171$). Meanwhile, there is a significant positive moderate relationship between the industry congeniality person and the managers ($r = 0.278$, $p < 0.01$). The highest significant positive moderate relationship between industry person congeniality and commitment to work ($r = 0.473$, $p > 0.01$)

Table 4: Pearson Correlation Between Independent Variables and Commitment to Work

	IPC	POM	MAG	CTW
IPC	1			
POM	0.171	1		
MAG	0.278**	0.184*	1	
CTW	0.473**	0.222*	0.321**	1

**, Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*, Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Multiple Regression

The R^2 value shown in Table 5 is 0.275, means that around 27.5% of the variance in perception can be explained by four dimensions (industry person congeniality, promotion opportunities, managers and commitment to work). The p-value = 0.000 means the overall of the regression model in this study is a good fit indicating that the coefficient of multiple determination R^2 is significantly different from zero. The result depicted that industry person congeniality was the most significant factor of perception ($\beta = 0.401$, sig. < 0.05), followed by managers ($\beta=0.187$, sig.< 0.05). The promotion opportunities have a low impact ($\beta=0.119$, sig > 0.05) and do not contribute significantly to commitment work. Moreover, the industry person congeniality has the highest beta coefficient and follow by managers.

Table 5: Multiple Regression Analysis

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t-value	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	-0.040	0.448		-.090	0.928
Industry Person Congeniality	0.482	0.101	0.401	4.767	0.000
Promotion Opportunities	0.117	0.081	0.119	1.447	0.151
Managers	0.203	0.091	0.187	2.225	0.028
Dependent Variable: Commitment to work					
R = .525					
$R^2 = .275$					
Adj. $R^2 = .257$					
F Change = 14.351					
P = .000 ^b					

DISCUSSION

The findings revealed that the most substantial influence of student commitment to work is by industry person congeniality. This finding is further supported by similar researches (Choudhary, Prasad and Nair, 2017) which claim the industry should provide a proper environment, a pleasant ambience, quality food for employees and relaxed working environment. A pleasant working environment can attract more graduates to enter the tourism and hospitality industries after graduation. The educational institution should be understood to provide the curriculum that meets the industry needs and improved the non-financial aspects of tourism and hospitality (Wen, Li and Kwon, 2019).

Promotional opportunities have a low significant relationship with the commitment to work. This shows, even though the wages, benefits and promotional opportunities not fair with their workload, they were still trying to stay and keep working. This result can be explained by the result of the previous study (Wan *et al.*, 2014; Wen *et al.*, 2019) higher compensation, pay and benefits and promotion opportunities could attractively graduate to enter the industry but did not have a significant impact toward a commitment to work in the industry.

The role of managers is to manage their staff and have a good relationship with the employees. In this study, managers have a low significant relationship with a commitment to work in the industry. However, the organisation should provide managers with training in terms of management and reduced the level of work stress in their employees in order to enhancing the image of tourism and hospitality working environment (Wan *et al.*, 2014). In the study, (Kusluvan and Kusluvan, 2000) states that the education sector should pay particular attention in the recruitment of managers and staff because it can give an impact of students to evaluated managers and co-workers negatively toward the tourism and hospitality industry.

CONCLUSION

This study focuses on the perception and commitment to work of TVET students to work after graduation. The importance result in this study is that a sustained collaboration between industry players and educational institutions helps to enhance the negative image of the industry. In this present study, there are only three factors that influence the commitment to work after graduation. Further research can be carried out focusing the other critical factors that can affect students to venture into the tourism and hospitality employment.

The limitations in this study is, the sample size. Future studies need to increase sample size to reflect the current situation and support the reliability of the result. Next, the time constraint in collecting the data during the Pandemic Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), that the Malaysian Government announced the Movement Control Order (MCO) started in March 2020.

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